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Imperialist Rivalries in Ethiopia

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Imperialist Rivalries in Ethiopia

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with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

EVENTS following a minor border clash between Ethiopian and Italian colonial troops in December 1934 have led to the danger of immediate war between Italy and Ethiopia and threaten to upset the existing balance of power in Europe. Italy has dispatched to its East African colonies the largest European force ever sent to Africa, claiming that the safety of Eritrea and Somaliland demands the establishment of a protectorate over Ethiopia—an Italian ambition first formulated in 1889. In his readiness to go to war in contravention of international commitments, Mussolini is apparently prepared to challenge Britain's traditional supremacy in the Mediterranean. The League Council, now in session at Geneva, is attempting to effect some compromise which will satisfy Italy's claims for expansion and avert the threatened war.

ETHIOPIA TODAY

Ethiopia, also called Abyssinia or "land of mixed peoples," covers an area of 350,000 square miles in northeast Africa which is entirely surrounded by the colonial possessions of Great Britain, France and Italy. From the hot semi-deserts of the northeast and southeast, which border on the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland, a plateau rises sharply 6,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level. The valley of the river Hawash—in which Ethiopia's only railway runs from Jibuti in French Somaliland to the capital, Addis Ababa—divides the plateau into unequal sections; jungle-filled gorges as much as 2,000 feet deep cut across the tableland, impeding communication and transport. During the annual rains, which are heaviest from June to September, travel is virtually impossible.

The population, estimated at between 5,500,000 and 7,500,000, is divided into subject and ruling

classes. The ruling Amharas, who number close to 3,000,000 and live on the plateau, are of Hamitic origin with infiltrations of Semitic and Negro blood; by religion they are Christians of the Coptic order, the head of their Church being appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria. They expanded their control over the whole of Ethiopia, including the outer provinces, during the past half century. The Gallas, most advanced of the subject groups, include both Christian and Moslem tribes; they constitute the peasant class. In the southwest are pagan Negroes and in the north, communities of Jews. The unruly nomadic tribes of the Danakil in the northeast and of the Ogaden in the southeast are Mohammedans.¹

The Ethiopian plateau, with a temperate climate ideal for Europeans, is a rich agricultural country: it yields two, and sometimes three, crops a year to the primitive methods of the natives, who raise barley, millet, wheat and coffee; and provides excellent grazing for cattle, sheep and goats. Other natural resources remain largely unexploited. These include cotton and sugar cane, rubber and other valuable trees, gold, platinum, iron, coal, copper, sulphur and potash salts.² The Ethiopian government has granted foreigners a few concessions for raising coffee and cotton; in May 1931 it proclaimed all alluvial mineral deposits to be state property.

Ethiopia exports coffee, hides and skins, and beeswax, chiefly to Great Britain and the United States. The largest imports are salt from French Somaliland, cheap cotton yarn and piece goods

1. *Statesman's Year-Book* (London, Macmillan, 1935), p. 652; Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Abyssinia* (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1920), pp. 9-11.

2. It has not been demonstrated that the extraction of Ethiopia's minerals for export could be profitably undertaken. Great Britain, Department of Overseas Trade, *Economic Conditions in Ethiopia* (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1932), p. 11.

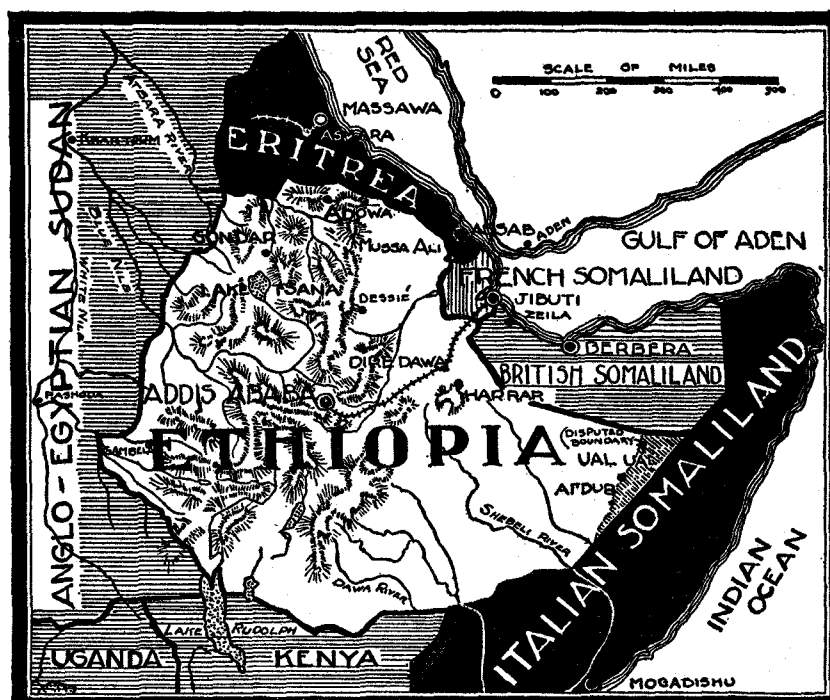
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from Japan, India and England, and corrugated iron sheets from Belgium and England. It is alleged that cheap Japanese goods have recently captured an increasing share of the Ethiopian market.³ Total trade declined from nearly 15 million dollars in 1929 to between 7.5 and 10 millions in 1933. It passes largely along the country's one railway, the French-controlled line from Jibuti to Addis Ababa, a 486-mile journey which requires from 33 hours to 5 days. Italy has only a small share in direct trade with Ethiopia; transit trade by caravan through Eritrea is estimated at 10 per cent of Ethiopia's total foreign commerce. Increased trade and exploitation of the country are hampered by the lack of motor roads.⁴

Haile Selassie I, Négus Negasti or "King of Kings," is Emperor and absolute ruler of Ethiopia. On July 16, 1931 he voluntarily proclaimed a constitution which set up a parliament of two houses, but this is an advisory body appointed by the Emperor. The ancient provincial divisions are ruled by direct appointees of the Emperor, who command the garrisons, collect taxes and dispense justice. Orders of the Emperor must be transmitted through them to lesser officers for execution. Because of this hierarchic system and the slowness of communication and travel, certain of the local chieftains, or *rases*, enjoy a considerable amount of actual independence. The nomadic tribes of the distant Danakil and Ogaden are not administered from Addis Ababa, and tend to disregard national frontiers in the pursuit of tribal feuds.

Haile Selassie is attempting to improve education, the administration of justice, and public health facilities. He has also employed a Belgian military mission to train the imperial bodyguard of 3,000 men, which is equipped with anti-aircraft



guns, automatic rifles and machine guns. Outside Addis Ababa, however, modernization progresses slowly. The standing army of 100,000, which garrisons the provinces, and the armed followers of local chiefs, who may number as many as 600,000, possess probably only 100,000 modern rifles in all. The whole of the fighting forces is handicapped by lack of ammunition and transport.

Domestic slavery is a recognized institution, but is being gradually eliminated. Slave trading is punishable by death. An edict of March 31, 1924 provided for the emancipation of children born of slaves and decreed severe penalties for failure to suppress the slave trade. A second law, of July 15, 1931, declared that slaves should be freed immediately on the death of their master.⁵ From September 1, 1933 to August 15, 1934, 3,647 slaves were liberated and 293 persons were sentenced for offenses under these laws.⁶

Ethiopia was admitted to membership in the League of Nations on September 28, 1923.⁷ As a condition of admittance it assumed two obligations

3. Robert Gale Woolbert, "Italy in Abyssinia," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1935, p. 501; M. Martelli-Chautard, "L'Expansion Japonaise en Afrique," *L'Afrique Française* (Paris), August 1934, p. 499.

4. These are limited to a road from the interior to the British trading post of Gambela near the Sudan, and to 700 miles of paved roads constructed since 1929, which radiate from Addis Ababa. League of Nations, Organization for Communication and Transit, *Enquiry on National Public Works, Addendum*, April 30, 1935, C.482.M.209.1934.VII., Addendum, pp. 101-2.

5. League of Nations, *Report from the Government of Abyssinia on the Question of Slavery*, May 14, 1924, C.209.M.66.1924.VI; *idem*, *Official Journal*, Special Supplement No. 99, Annex 3.

6. *Idem*, *Slavery, Report of the Advisory Committee of Experts*, April 10, 1935, C.159.M.113.1935.VI., pp. 93-4.

7. *Idem*, *Official Journal*, Special Supplement No. 13, p. 125. France, supported by Italy, was sponsor for Ethiopia; the British at first raised objections on the grounds of the continuance of slavery and the ineffective control of the government in the outlying provinces. For the debates on the admission of Ethiopia in the Sixth Committee of the Assembly, cf. *ibid.*, Special Supplement No. 19, pp. 12-16, 17-21 and 26.

incumbent on European powers possessing territory in Africa and on the Red Sea: to "endeavor to secure the complete suppression of slavery . . . and the slave trade," and to prohibit the acquisition of arms by unauthorized persons within its territory.⁸ On August 21, 1930 Ethiopia signed a treaty with Great Britain, France and Italy designed to implement this pledge and enable the Emperor "to obtain all the arms and munitions necessary for the defense of his territories from external aggression."⁹ Ethiopia agreed that no arms, ammunition or implements of war should be imported except under order in writing signed by the Emperor; it also engaged to publish the statistics of all arms purchased and to prevent their transfer from the hands of the government or its subordinates. The European signatories agreed to export arms to Ethiopia only under a license system, to publish statistics of all shipments, and to refuse transit of arms "if the attitude or the disturbed condition of Ethiopia constitutes a threat to peace or public order."¹⁰

INTERESTS OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS

Toward the close of the 19th century, when colonial expansion of the European powers in Africa reached its height, Ethiopia was swept into the full current of international politics. Its natural resources and temperate climate invited foreign exploitation, while Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile, rendered it strategically important to any nation controlling Egypt and the Sudan.¹¹ Three great powers—Britain, France and Italy—were primarily concerned in the struggle to dominate Ethiopia and the surrounding territories.

GREAT BRITAIN

For more than twenty years after Britain acquired control of the Suez Canal in 1875, Franco-British rivalry centered in the Nile basin. Having occupied Egypt in 1882, Great Britain insisted that no other European power should dominate the Upper Nile. Following Ethiopia's victory over the Italians at Adowa on March 1, 1896, Britain could no longer rely on Italy to prevent a French advance from French Somaliland across Ethiopia to the Nile, and on March 12, 1896 ordered the re-conquest

of the Sudan from the Mahdi. In 1898 the superior strength of Kitchener's army forced the withdrawal of French troops which had advanced to Fashoda on the Upper Nile from French Equatorial Africa. An Anglo-French agreement, signed March 21, 1899, reserved the Nile basin to Britain.¹²

Great Britain's objectives in the Upper Nile basin were finally attained by a treaty concluded with Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia on May 15, 1902. The boundary line was so drawn that the Sudan included both banks of the Blue Nile below the highlands. Menelik also granted Britain the right to build a section of the Cape-to-Cairo railway across his territory, and to lease a trading station on the Sudan-Ethiopian border. By Article 3 Emperor Menelik further engaged "not to construct or to allow to be constructed any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana, or the Sobat which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile, except in agreement with the Governments of Great Britain and the Sudan."¹³

Although the British still retain their veto over the construction of a barrage across the Blue Nile by any other power, they have been unsuccessful in obtaining a contract to build the dam themselves. In 1930 the J. G. White Engineering Corporation of New York was appointed engineering consultant to Ethiopia, and on the instruction of the Sudan and Ethiopian governments made a survey for a dam at Lake Tsana.¹⁴ At the expense of Egypt, the White Corporation made a second survey in 1933-1934, as a result of which Ethiopia on May 10, 1935 invited representatives of the British, Egyptian and Sudan governments to a conference in Addis Ababa. Great Britain, anxious to avoid any step which might aggravate the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, replied that it favored postponing the matter for the time being.¹⁵

FRANCE

Since the failure of French efforts to prevent British control of the Upper Nile, the interests of France in Ethiopia have centered in the Jibuti-

8. *Ibid.*, Special Supplement No. 13, p. 125; *idem*, *Treaty Series*, vol. 8, p. 35, vol. 7, p. 343.

9. Great Britain, *Treaty Series* No. 10, 1932. Cmd. 4051 (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1932).

10. Arms for Ethiopia have recently been held up under this provision. Cf. p. 179.

11. Cf. Leonard Woolf, *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (London, George Allen and Unwin), pp. 138-227.

12. *British and Foreign State Papers* (London, H. M. Stationery Office), 1898-1899, vol. 91, pp. 55-57.

13. *Ibid.*, 1901-1902, vol. 95, pp. 467-69.

14. The British government considered the Sudan's needs safeguarded by the presence of the latter's irrigation adviser at the Addis Ababa parleys. In its eagerness to have the dam built, it had no objection to the award of the contract to a foreign firm of the White Corporation's standing. Cf. statements of Arthur Henderson, Foreign Secretary, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Official Reports*, March 20, 1930, vol. 236, p. 2152; June 2, 1930, vol. 239, p. 1756.

15. Statement of Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for League of Nations Affairs, *ibid.*, July 9, 1935, vol. 304, p. 154. Nevertheless the public works budget of the Egyptian government

Addis Ababa railway, which was finally completed in 1917. In order to prevent British financial interests from gaining control of the French company to which Menelik had granted the railway concession in November 1896, and thereby forcing construction of a line to Zeila in British Somaliland, the French government on April 6, 1902 approved an annual subvention to the railway company by the government of French Somaliland. In return, the company pledged itself to remain under French financial control and submit to supervision by the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Colonies. The French Somaliland government, moreover, was to receive reduced rates and to obtain eventual control of the line as far as Harrar.¹⁶ To meet objections of Ethiopia, Great Britain and Italy to this governmental domination, the French agreed by the treaty of December 13, 1906¹⁷ that the board of directors should include a national of each of these states.

When this company was liquidated in 1908 Menelik granted a railway monopoly for the region between Jibuti and Addis Ababa to the *Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Franco-Ethiopien de Djibouti à Addis Ababa*, which was also to be governed by an international board of directors, under the supervision of the French government.¹⁸ The French interests obtained about 20,000 of the 34,600 500-franc shares, while Menelik was credited with 4,600 shares in return for debts owed him by the defunct company. Since its completion the railway has carried about 75 per cent of Ethiopia's foreign trade; traffic for 1933 amounted to 51,993 metric tons.¹⁹

ITALY

Whereas Great Britain and France came into contact with Ethiopia through their contest for control of the Upper Nile, Italy has desired to exploit Ethiopia in order to offset its own lack of raw materials and render profitable its widely separated and comparatively poor colonies in East Africa. In 1882 the Italian government took possession of Assab on the Red Sea, and in 1885 occupied Massawa. Following the defeat of an Italian force in northeastern Ethiopia in 1887, Italy agreed to support the Emperor's rival, King Menelik of Shoa. According to the Amharic version of the treaty of Ucciali, signed on May 2, 1889, Menelik enjoyed the right to have Italy act as intermediary in his dealings with foreign powers. But according to the Italian text, Menelik "consents to avail himself of the Italian government for any negotiations which he may enter into with the other powers or governments."²⁰ On October 1 of the same year the two powers signed an additional convention whereby Menelik recognized "the sovereignty of the King of Italy in the Colonies which go under the name of Italian possessions on the Red Sea." The frontiers were to be drawn by "taking as a basis the actual state of possession."²¹

On October 12, 1889 Italy notified the powers that Ethiopia had become its protectorate by virtue of the Ucciali treaty, and that the Italian Red Sea possessions would be known as Eritrea. Italy did not remain content with "the actual state of possession," but crossed the Mareb River in 1890 and occupied Adowa. It had already laid the foundations for its colony of Somaliland on the Indian Ocean in 1889 by treaties establishing its protectorate over the domains of the Sultans of Obbia and the Mijertini.²²

At this period Italy's attempts to dominate Ethiopia received British support. By protocols of March 24 and April 15, 1891 Great Britain recognized as a "sphere of influence reserved to Italy" the whole of what is at present Ethiopia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.²³ Furthermore, in its capacity as protector of the Sultan of Zanzibar, the British government in August 1892 approved the Sultan's cession to Italy of administrative rights in certain ports on the Benadir coast.²⁴

Menelik, however, upon being apprised by France of the Italian interpretation of the Ucciali treaty, refused to ratify the treaty, and denounced it in 1893 preparatory to resisting the Italian claims by force. When the Italian commander took the offensive with 13,000 men in 1896, he was crushingly defeated by 90,000 Ethiopians at Adowa. The treaty of peace,²⁵ signed on October 26, 1896, annulled the

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20. *British and Foreign State Papers*, cited, 1888-1889, vol. 81, pp. 733-5.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 736-7.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-4.

23. *Ibid.*, 1890-1891, vol. 83, pp. 19-21. An Anglo-Italian agreement of May 5, 1894 defined the extent of British Somaliland. *Ibid.*, 1893-1894, vol. 86, p. 55.

24. *Ibid.*, 1891-1892, vol. 84, pp. 630-35.

25. *Ibid.*, 1895-1896, vol. 88, pp. 481-82.

16. For the texts of this and previous agreements, cf. Pierre-Alype, *L'Ethiopie et les Convoitises Allemandes* (Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1917), pp. 231-47.

17. Cf. p. 174.

18. For texts of the agreements between this company and the French and Ethiopian governments, cf. Pierre-Alype, *L'Ethiopie et les Convoitises Allemandes*, cited, pp. 251-75.

19. *Journal des Nations* (Geneva), February 9, 1935. Between 1924 and 1927 the railway company repaid all advances by the French government; since 1929 it has paid 125 francs a share annually in dividends. During the depression it lowered freight rates, especially on exports; nevertheless, profits on each ton of merchandise which was carried the length of the railway in 1933 exceeded 200 francs.

treaty of Ucciali. By recognizing Ethiopia as "a sovereign and independent State," Italy temporarily abandoned its attempt to link its colonies across the rich Ethiopian highlands.

THE TRIPARTITE TREATY OF 1906

Ten years later the threat of German penetration in Ethiopia caused Great Britain, France and Italy to conclude the treaty of December 13, 1906,²⁶ which remains the basic treaty setting out the rights of these three powers in Ethiopia. The signatories agreed to "cooperate in maintaining the political and territorial *status quo* in Ethiopia" and, should that *status quo* be disturbed, to "make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia." At the same time, they engaged "to act together . . . in order to safeguard" the special interests which each power had acquired or hoped to acquire from the Ethiopian government. By the following definition of these interests Italy accepted a distinct limitation of its comprehensive sphere of influence in Ethiopia established by the Anglo-Italian protocols of 1891:

"(a) The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile basin, more especially as regards the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests) without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in (b);

"(b) The interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the *hinterland* of her possessions and the territorial connection between them to the west of Addis Ababa;

"(c) The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate of the Somali Coast, the *hinterland* of their Protectorate, and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa."

The signatories also agreed that their respective shares in railway construction across Ethiopian territory should conform to these spheres of influence. A French company was to complete the railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa;²⁷ railway construction west of the capital was to be carried out "under the auspices of Great Britain," but any railway construction "to the west of Addis Ababa connecting Benadir [Italian Somaliland] with Eritrea shall, in so far as foreign assistance is required, be carried out under the auspices of Italy." The British also reserved the right to construct a railway from British Somaliland to the Sudan after agreement with the French and Italian governments. The three powers further agreed that they would seek no con-

cessions which would injure the interests of the others; that without previous agreement no signatory would construct any railway line which would compete directly with those established under the auspices of another signatory; and that the directorate of any railway company would include a representative of the other powers and of Ethiopia.

ITALY AND ETHIOPIA, 1906-1935

By the 1906 treaty the three powers received assurance that their special interests in Ethiopia would not be challenged by their former rivals. But whereas the British and French interests had previously been acknowledged by Menelik, those of Italy had not. Menelik was not a party to the 1906 treaty. In acknowledging receipt of its text he declared: "let it be understood that this arrangement in no way limits what we consider our sovereign rights."²⁸ Since 1906, therefore, Italy has directed its efforts to obtaining from Ethiopia, both by direct negotiations and with the aid of France or Great Britain, the realization of those special interests recognized in the 1906 treaty.

Before pursuing these larger objectives Italy regularized its relations with Ethiopia. On July 21, 1906 it signed a treaty of commerce with Menelik.²⁹ Two conventions of May 16, 1908 completed a definition of the boundaries between Ethiopia and Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.³⁰ Actual demarcation of the Ethiopian-Somaliland boundary was begun in 1910, but was never finished. The boundary was to separate those tribes dependent on Ethiopia from those formerly dependent on the Sultans of Obbia. Eastward from the Shebeli River its definition was complicated by a number of stipulations: the line was to follow that "accepted by the Italian government in 1897," which was to have been drawn parallel to the coast 180 miles inland, but had never been demarcated;³¹ at the same time, it was to be drawn so that "all the territory belonging to the tribes toward the coast shall remain dependent on Italy; all the territory of Ogaden, and all the tribes toward the Ogaden, shall remain dependent on Ethiopia."

Italy's failure to obtain at Versailles the territorial compensation in Africa which it expected from France and Great Britain by virtue of the secret

28. Great Britain, *Abyssinia*, cited, p. 51.

29. *British and Foreign State Papers*, cited, 1905-1906, vol. 99, p. 1069.

30. *Ibid.*, 1907-1908, vol. 101, pp. 1000-1002. Previous treaties defining the Eritrean-Ethiopian border had been the treaty between Italy and Ethiopia of July 10, 1900 and the Annex to that treaty, signed May 15, 1902; *ibid.*, 1901-1902, vol. 95, pp. 463-4, 469-71.

31. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, February 1935, p. 256.

26. *Ibid.*, 1905-1906, vol. 99, p. 486.

27. Cf. p. 173.

agreement signed on April 26, 1915³² led Rome to open negotiations with London for the purpose of uniting their efforts at Addis Ababa. In November 1919 Italy requested British support in order to obtain a concession to construct and run the railway connecting Eritrea and Italian Somaliland west of Addis Ababa which France and Britain had agreed by the 1906 treaty should be built "under the auspices of Italy." In return, Italy expressed its willingness to support British efforts to obtain the concession for construction of a dam at Lake Tsana and a motor road from the Sudan border to the dam. At that time Britain rejected the Italian proposal.

In December 1925, however, Mussolini obtained Britain's agreement to the 1919 proposals and its conditional assent to an extension of Italy's special interests in Ethiopia as defined by the 1906 treaty. The representatives of the two powers at Addis Ababa were "to concert together for common action" so that the two concessions might be granted simultaneously. Britain further agreed that, should it obtain the concession for the dam, it would "recognize an exclusive Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway" and would "further promise to support with the Abyssinian Government all Italian requests for economic concessions in the above zone."³³ In view of French and Ethiopian protests, however, action under this agreement was dropped in July 1926.³⁴

In spite of this setback, Mussolini succeeded in concluding with Ethiopia on August 2, 1928 a treaty of amity, conciliation and arbitration which also obligated Ethiopia to promote trade with Italy.³⁵

"Article 1—There shall be constant peace and perpetual friendship between the Kingdom of Italy and the Abyssinian Empire.

32. Great Britain, *Miscellaneous Papers* No. 7, Cmd. 671, 1920 (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1920). Subsequent frontier adjustments in favor of Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland at the expense of British and French colonies have not overcome Italian resentment against the Versailles treaty. Cf. Royal Institute of International Affairs, "Abyssinia and Italy," *Information Department Papers*, No. 16 (London, July 1935), pp. 10-12.

33. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 50, No. 1211, "Exchange of Notes Respecting Certain British and Italian Interests in Abyssinia," Rome, December 14, 20, 1925.

34. Cf. Woolbert, "Italy in Abyssinia," cited, pp. 502-4. France claimed that the 1906 treaty forbade any interference in Ethiopia except by agreement of all signatories and that an exclusive Italian sphere would destroy the open door. Ethiopia protested to the League of Nations against a joint Anglo-Italian "attempt to exert pressure." League of Nations, *Note from His Imperial and Royal Highness, Tafari Makonnen, Regent and Heir to the Throne of Abyssinia*, July 27, 1926, C.428.M.161.1926.VII.

35. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, 1929, vol. 94, No. 2158. Article 5 has formed the basis on which the two countries have attempted to arrive at a settlement of their present dispute.

"Article 2—Each Government undertakes not to engage, under any pretext, in action calculated to injure or prejudice the independence of the other, and the two Governments undertake to safeguard the interests of their respective countries.

"Article 3—Both Governments undertake to develop and promote trade between the two countries.

"Article 5—Both Governments undertake to submit to a procedure of conciliation and arbitration disputes which may arise between them and which it may not have been possible to settle by ordinary diplomatic methods, without having recourse to armed force."

By a road convention signed the same day Italy agreed to grant Ethiopia a free zone in the port of Assab, Eritrea, in return for a concession to construct a motor road from Assab to Dessié in Ethiopia.³⁶

Early in 1935 Italy's increasing fear of Nazi Germany led to a rapprochement with France which Mussolini apparently utilized to remove traditional French opposition to Italian expansion in Ethiopia.³⁷ By the Rome accord of January 7 Italy agreed to support French policy in Central Europe and obtained territorial concessions from France in Libya and Eritrea and the right to purchase 2,500 shares in the Jibuti-Addis Ababa railway.³⁸ It was widely suggested that the published text had been accompanied by a secret understanding, which Paris interpreted as a declaration limiting its "special interests" in Ethiopia to the railway zone, but which Rome took to mean the grant of a free hand to carry out its ambitions in Ethiopia.³⁹

ITALY'S "NEED OF EXPANSION"

The agreements so far concluded by Italy with Ethiopia and with European powers have neither satisfied its colonial ambitions nor opened up the trade essential to the economic development of its East African colonies. Italy lacks iron, coal, oil,

36. *Ibid.*, No. 2159.

37. Cf. Vera Micheles Dean, "Europe's Struggle for Security," *Foreign Policy Reports*, June 19, 1935, pp. 91-6.

38. France, *Chambre des Députés, annexe au procès-verbal de la deuxième séance du 26 février 1935, no. 4817, L'Exposé des Motifs*. Italian acquisition of 2,500 shares would leave control in French hands. In Rome, however, it was held that Italy would obtain 20 per cent of the stock and that Italians would be appointed to four directorships on a board of thirteen, and to important administrative posts. Cf. statement of the rapporteur on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Italian Chamber, April 27, 1935, *L'Afrique Française* (Paris), May 1935, pp. 306-7.

39. Cf. *Manchester Guardian*, January 16, 1935; *New York Times*, February 12, 1935; Royal Institute of International Affairs, "Abyssinia and Italy," cited, p. 18. On June 19 M. Laval denied before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber that France had agreed to give Italy a free hand in Ethiopia.

cotton and other essential raw materials,⁴⁰ while its agricultural produce is insufficient to feed the population, which is increasing by nearly 500,000 a year with government encouragement. Britain and France, moreover, far outdistanced Italy in the race for colonies. Those parts of Africa which fell to Italy provided neither the needed raw materials nor opportunities for colonization.

Italy's possessions in East Africa have failed to become economic assets. Largely unfit for white colonization, they have a total Italian population of only 6,200. The budgets of both Eritrea and Somaliland must be balanced by large grants from the mother country; their trade balances are heavily adverse. One-half of Somaliland would repay extensive irrigation; but the natives, once freed from slavery, have been loath to work, so that foodstuffs have had to be imported. The development of Eritrea is especially dependent on trade with Ethiopia.⁴¹

At present Italy is faced with a critical economic situation. Under the impact of the world depression the national budget has shown substantial deficits since 1930-31. Drastic deflation has caused a continuing decline in wholesale prices and successive reductions in wages without achieving a corresponding decrease in the cost of living. Maintenance of the gold standard has handicapped the principal exporting industries—silk, rayon, cotton goods—in competition with British and Japanese rivals.⁴² In order to minimize its unfavorable trade balance, Italy instituted a licensing system which drastically curtailed all imports except essential raw materials and foodstuffs. Nevertheless, the continued adverse balance of international payments obliged the government to introduce a virtual foreign exchange monopoly on December 8, 1934 by nationalizing all assets held abroad by Italian companies and citizens. On July 22, 1935 Italy suspended the 40 per cent gold reserve requirement against its note issue in order to meet its international obligations with gold and prevent devaluation of the lira.⁴³

40. Cf. Vera Micheles Dean, "The Economic Situation in Italy: Italy in the World Crisis," *Foreign Policy Reports*, January 30, 1935, p. 313.

41. *Statesman's Year-Book*, 1935, cited, pp. 1061-3; J. H. C., "L'Afrique Orientale Italienne," *L'Afrique Française*, Supplement, July 1934; Libycus, "La Politique Italienne en Afrique Orientale," *ibid.*, February 1935, p. 112.

42. Dean, "The Economic Situation in Italy: Italy in the World Crisis," cited, p. 316.

43. Royal Institute of International Affairs, "The Economic and Financial Position of Italy," *Information Department Papers*, No. 15, June 1935; *Journal des Nations*, August 3, 1935. In spite of its financial difficulties, the Fascist government has increased its efforts to develop Eritrea and Somaliland. In 1933 and 1934 construction of railways, motor roads and irrigation projects were pushed, the civil administration reformed, and

To Mussolini, control of Ethiopia offers a tempting solution for many problems of Italy and its colonies. Ethiopia possesses coal, iron and possibly oil; it is particularly well suited to the growing of fine quality, long-staple cotton, which Italy at present imports almost entirely from foreign sources. The temperate climate of the Ethiopian plateau is ideal for European colonization. A railway link between Eritrea and Somaliland across Ethiopia would enable Italy to enrich its colonies by the transit trade now carried on the Jibuti railway. In the immediate situation the development of Ethiopia would benefit the Italian construction industries, and political control might enable Italy to displace Japan as the chief supplier of cotton goods to the Ethiopians. Acquisition of territory, by increasing Italy's place in the sun, would direct the attention of taxpayers away from their economic burdens. War would further speed up home industrial activity and eliminate unemployment. An armed conquest of Ethiopia, to which Fascist principles are by no means opposed,⁴⁵ would wipe out the rankling memories of Adowa.

PRESENT ITALO-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE

The death of thirty Somali soldiers in a border clash with Ethiopian troops in December 1934 supplied Italy with a convenient pretext for pressing its efforts to obtain control of Ethiopia. In order to be in a position to force Ethiopia's submission should Haile Selassie refuse to accede to its demands, Italy has concentrated 200,000 troops in its East African colonies since February 1935.

THE UAL UAL INCIDENT

On December 5, 1934 sharp fighting broke out between an Italian contingent occupying Ual Ual in Ogaden and the Ethiopian military escort of an Anglo-Ethiopian boundary commission.⁴⁶ Ethiopia

large military reinforcements sent to East Africa. On January 16, 1935 Mussolini took over the office of Minister of Colonies and sent out his predecessor, General De Bono, as first High Commissioner for Italian East Africa. "L'Africa Orientale Italiana," Part II, *Rassegna Italiana* (Rome), September-October, 1933. P. V., "La Somalie Italienne," *L'Afrique Française*, November 1934, pp. 662-66; *New York Times*, September 9, 1934; January 17, 1935.

45. According to the tenets of Fascism, "the growth of Empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence—like the people of Italy—are always imperialist." Fascism "affirms the immutable, beneficial and fruitful inequality of mankind" and considers it Italy's duty, as a heritage from ancient Rome, to impose its civilization on Africans. Benito Mussolini, "The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism," *Political Quarterly* (London), July-September 1933, pp. 356 and 347.

46. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, February 1935, Annex 1530, Communication No. 10.

charged that the Italians had occupied Ethiopian territory and had begun hostilities, but offered to arbitrate the dispute in accordance with the 1928 treaty.⁴⁷ Italy demanded reparation for the "unexpected aggression" of Ethiopian troops on a post of Italian Somaliland, and on December 14 refused to consider arbitration.⁴⁸ It asserted that the Ual Ual incident was "the most recent of a lengthy series of attacks carried out . . . with a view to disputing, by means of threatening acts, the legality of the presence of Italian detachments in certain frontier localities."⁴⁹ Ethiopia, on the other hand, charged that Italy was pursuing a "policy of gradual encroachment" on the Ogaden frontier; on December 14 it called the attention of the League of Nations to the gravity of the affair, and on January 3, 1935 invoked Article 11 of the Covenant, requesting that "every measure effectually to safeguard peace be taken."⁵⁰

LEAGUE'S FIRST ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT

Subsequent efforts to settle the dispute have accentuated the opposing views of the disputants as to the proper methods to employ. Ethiopia has attempted to submit the case to a neutral body which would examine both the question of responsibility for the fighting at Ual Ual and that of the ownership of the disputed locality, claiming that "these two questions form an inseparable whole."⁵¹ Italy, on the other hand, has attempted to settle the dispute directly with Ethiopia and, failing that, has striven to limit the competence of any neutral body, contending that "the responsibility for the fight at Ual Ual and the subsequent incidents [is] the precise point at issue that has to be settled,

while the determination of the Italo-Ethiopian frontier must be effected in accordance with the provisions of Article 5 of the Italo-Ethiopian treaty of 1908 . . . after the present dispute has been settled."⁵² Two factors mainly contributed to the reluctance of the League Council to deal with the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and thereby favored the Italian policy of direct settlement: the disinclination of France and Great Britain to risk offending Italy and so lose Italian support against the threat of Nazi Germany,⁵³ and the League's fear of repeating its failure to halt Japan in Manchuria.

At the request of Ethiopia the Council placed the dispute on the agenda of its January 1935 session, but never discussed it. Under Franco-British pressure the Ethiopian and Italian delegates promised that a direct settlement would be attempted in accordance with the 1928 treaty and that "all expedient measures will be taken and all useful instructions will be confirmed or given for the avoidance of fresh incidents." Accordingly, the Council on January 19 postponed the matter until its May session.⁵⁴

On January 29 a fresh incident nevertheless occurred, costing the lives of five Italian Somali soldiers at Afdub, near Ual Ual.⁵⁵ On February 10 Italy ordered the "precautionary" mobilization of two regular army divisions; on February 13 it was announced that the Italian government was prepared to spend \$850,000,000 in a two-year campaign to obtain "complete satisfaction" from Ethiopia; on February 16 the first troops sailed for East Africa.⁵⁶ Italy claimed that these preparations were defensive and necessitated by Ethiopia's mobilization, large shipments of arms to Addis Ababa, the "aggressive spirit" of the Emperor's speech to his parliament,⁵⁷ and alleged failure to prevent a succession of raids into Eritrea and Somaliland.⁵⁸

47. *Ibid.*, Appendix Nos. 20, 21 and 24.

48. *Ibid.*, Appendix Nos. 22, 23, 25 and 27. Reparation was to take the form of an apology from the governor of Harrar, a salute to the Italian flag at Ual Ual, payment of 200,000 Ethiopian thalers, and punishment of the responsible Ethiopian officers. Both governments claimed sovereignty over the Ual Ual locality in virtue of the treaty of May 16, 1908. Ethiopia pointed out that Ual Ual is 60 miles on the Ethiopian side of the 1897 lines, and asserted that it belonged to Ogaden tribes dependent on Ethiopia. Italy claimed that tribal considerations overruled the factor of distance from the coast, that the tribes using the Ual Ual wells were formerly dependent on the Sultan of Obbia, and that it had occupied Ual Ual for several years without protest. In reply to Ethiopian citations of official Italian maps showing Ual Ual in Ethiopia, Italy stated that these maps were altered from edition to edition and could not be accepted as evidence of its claims. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-67; *idem*, *Request by the Ethiopian Government, Memorandum*, C.230(1).M.114.(1).1935.VII., June 12, 1935, Appendix 2/46.

49. *Idem*, *Official Journal*, February 1935, Annex 1530, Communication No. 4.

50. *Ibid.*, Communications Nos. 1, 7 and 8.

51. *Idem*, *Request by the Ethiopian Government, Memorandum*, cited, Appendix 2/57.

52. *Ibid.*, Appendix 2/56.

53. Cf. Dean, "Europe's Struggle for Security," cited, pp. 91-101.

54. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, February 1935, pp. 162-63; *New York Times*, January 19, 20, 27, 1935.

55. For the conflicting Italian and Ethiopian versions of the Afdub clash, cf. League of Nations, *Request by the Ethiopian Government, Memorandum*, cited, Appendix 2/26-2/57 *passim*.

56. *New York Herald Tribune*, February 11, 14, 17, 1935. Four days later General De Bono was given supreme military command in East Africa and General Graziani was appointed civil as well as military governor of Somaliland.

57. *New York Times*, May 8, 1935; *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), April 24, 1935. Ethiopia denied having mobilized its troops. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, May 1935, Annex 1537, Communication No. 4, March 29, 1935.

58. Speech of Alessandro Lessona before the Chamber of Deputies, *New York Herald Tribune*, May 8, 1935. For reports of alleged incidents, cf. *New York Times*, March 21, 26, April 27, June 1, 4, 1935; *New York Herald Tribune*, April 3, May 7,

ETHIOPIA'S SECOND APPEAL TO THE LEAGUE

In Addis Ababa, however, Italy's dispatch of troops to East Africa was viewed as a threat against the territorial integrity of the Empire, in contravention of Article 10 of the League Covenant. Ethiopia therefore made a succession of appeals to the League, requesting that the Council investigate the dispute under Article 15, that the League hasten arbitration under the 1928 treaty and force Italy to cease its military preparations until an arbitration commission reached a decision, and finally that the Council deal with the dispute at its extraordinary session called for April 15.⁵⁹ The Council, however, again refused to discuss the dispute, accepting the argument of the Italian representative that, because Italy had the previous day declared its willingness to proceed with conciliation and arbitration, action under Article 15 was precluded.⁶⁰

Little progress had been made before the Council met for its regular May session. On May 14 Italy appointed its representatives on a conciliation commission to be set up under the 1928 treaty, with the avowed intention of using this item of progress as an excuse for keeping the dispute off the Council agenda. It entered an official protest against the Ethiopian nominees, Professor Pitman B. Potter and Albert de Lapradelle, on the ground that they were not Ethiopian nationals.⁶¹ Following orders for additional mobilization in Italy and the Italian East African colonies, Emperor Haile Selassie on May 20 requested that the Council stop Italy's military preparations and "make a full inquiry and examination of the dispute on the basis of Article 15" unless Italy agreed that the arbitrators should interpret the boundary treaty of May 16, 1908.⁶²

THE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS OF MAY 25, 1935

On May 25 the Council passed two resolutions, which were the result of a week's Franco-British attempts to produce a formula acceptable to Italy for advancing settlement of the dispute. The first resolution noted that diplomatic negotiations had been exhausted; that arbitrators, to whom Italy took no exception, had been named to settle the

Ual Ual and subsequent frontier incidents; and that "the two Governments agree to fix August 25 next as the date on which the procedure of conciliation and arbitration shall be concluded." By the second resolution the Council decided to meet if, in default of agreement between the four arbitrators for the settlement of the dispute, an understanding had not been reached by July 25 as to the selection of the fifth arbitrator; and to examine the situation if a settlement by means of conciliation and arbitration had not taken place by August 25.⁶³

These resolutions failed to comply with Haile Selassie's request of May 20. The Council took no steps to halt Italian war preparations. On May 31 and July 15 Italy mobilized additional divisions for African service.⁶⁴ The failure of the Council resolutions and the ensuing discussion to reconcile the views of the disputants concerning the conciliation commission's terms of reference⁶⁵ led inevitably to basic disagreement among the commission's members, who suspended their efforts on July 9.⁶⁶

The meager results attending Ethiopian appeals to Geneva and to neutral powers emphasized the general desire not to offend Italy. The League of Nations took no action on Ethiopia's request of June 20 that the Council send neutral observers at Ethiopia's expense to inspect the frontier districts; nor on its requests of July 11 and July 24 for immediate convocation of the Council.⁶⁷ In response to Ethiopia's appeal that the United States remind Italy of its obligations under the Kellogg pact, Secretary of State Hull declared on July 12 that the anti-war pact was "no less binding now than when it was entered into" and that the United States and other signatories were "interested in the maintenance of the pact and the sanctity of international commitments assumed thereby," but gave no indication that the American government in-

63. League of Nations, Eighty-sixth Session of the Council, *Minutes*, C./86th Session/P.V.5(1), May 25, 1935.

64. *New York Times*, June 1, 6, July 16, 1935. On July 15 it was calculated that 111,000 soldiers, together with 30,000 specialized workmen, had already landed in Africa.

65. League of Nations, Eighty-sixth Session of the Council, *Minutes*, cited. The Ethiopian representative maintained that the commission should consider "all the circumstances likely to affect the solution of the dispute . . . [which] of course includes interpretation of the treaties and agreements regarding the frontier." Baron Aloisi of Italy declared that "the task of interpreting the 1908 treaty and settling all cognate questions" belonged to the boundary commission set up under that treaty.

66. *Idem*, *Dispute between Italy and Ethiopia*, C.272.M.139-1935.VII., July 11, 1935. When the Ethiopian counsel examined the question of the ownership of Ual Ual, the Italian members of the commission refused to hear his evidence further or to consider appointment of a fifth member.

67. *Idem*, *Dispute between Ethiopia and Italy, Request by the Ethiopian Government*, C.254.M.126.1935.VII., June 20, 1935; *ibid.*, C.272.M.139.1935.VII., July 11, 1935; *ibid.*, C.282.M.149-1935.VII., July 24, 1935.

1935; *Christian Science Monitor*, April 24, 1935. For Ethiopian denials of these charges, cf. *New York Times*, February 13, April 3, June 13, 1935.

59. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, May 1935, Annex 1537, Communication Nos. 2, 4, 5.

60. *Idem*, *Official Journal*, May 1935, pp. 546-50.

61. *New York Times*, May 15, 16, 18, 1935. The Italian nominees were two government officials.

62. League of Nations, *Dispute between Ethiopia and Italy, Request by the Ethiopian Government*, C.220.M.112.1935.VII., May 20, 1935.

tended to go beyond a declaration of principles.⁶⁸ France, Belgium, Denmark and Czechoslovakia held up arms shipments and refused to accept orders to equip the Ethiopian army, while Great Britain declared a temporary arms embargo on July 25 against both Italy and Ethiopia.

EFFORTS TO MEET ITALY'S FULL DEMANDS

While the League Council was thus concerning itself with the responsibility for frontier incidents, Italy multiplied its accusations and widened its demands on Ethiopia. The government-controlled press cited the attack of November 17, 1934 on the Italian consulate at Gondar⁶⁹ as evidence of the Ethiopians' special hatred of Italy, and published maps indicating where Haile Selassie's armies would attack Italian colonies in the determination to expel Italy from Africa.⁷⁰ Italy also charged Ethiopia with failure to promote trade between the two countries in accordance with its obligations under the 1928 treaty, and with discrimination against Italians in the granting of economic concessions and the appointment of foreign advisers at Addis Ababa.⁷¹ In particular, it accused Ethiopia of obstructionist tactics which prevented the construction of the motor road from Dessié to the Eritrean border. On the ground that the continued existence of slavery proved the barbarism of Ethiopia, Italian officials and the Fascist press demanded that Italy's "European value as a civilized nation" be acknowledged by allowing Mussolini to impose a new "organization" on Ethiopia.⁷²

Late in June Great Britain made a unilateral attempt to avert the threat of war by meeting Italy's current insistence on its traditional aims in Ethiopia. It proposed to Mussolini that Ethiopia grant to Italy concessions for cotton and coffee plantations and for a railway to link the Italian colonies; and, to assure Ethiopia's compliance, offered to cede a strip of British Somaliland giving Ethiopia access to the Gulf of Aden at Zeila. Mussolini refused to consider the British offer.⁷³

68. U. S. Department of State, *Press Releases*, July 13, 1935.

69. *New York Times*, November 18, 28, 1934.

70. *Lavoro Fascista*, May 19, 1935; *Corriere della Sera*, May 21, 1935; *La Tribuna*, June 4, 1935.

71. Italy objected particularly to alleged concessions to Japanese interests.

72. *Giornale d'Italia*, May 15, 1935; cf. speech of Alessandro Lessona, cited, *New York Herald Tribune*, May 8, 1935. Italy recently admitted that domestic slavery continues to exist in its colony of Libya. League of Nations, *Slavery, Report of the Advisory Committee of Experts*, cited, pp. 100-101.

73. *New York Times*, June 26, 27, July 2, 3, 1935. This proposal offended the French, who were already incensed at the conclusion of the Anglo-German naval agreement without their assent, by arousing fears that trade would be diverted from the Jibuti railway. Both during the May Council session and following this unsatisfactory offer the Fascist press campaigned against

At an extraordinary session, called by reason of the conciliation commission's failure to reach a decision or appoint a fifth member by July 25, the Council again confined itself to furthering the settlement of the frontier incidents. On August 3 it accepted the Italian case by unanimously passing a resolution directing the commission, after appointment of a fifth member, to continue its efforts to determine the aggressor at Ual Ual but not to concern itself with interpretation of the frontier treaties.⁷⁴ By a second resolution, on which Italy abstained from voting, the Council postponed "examination, in its various aspects, of the relations between Italy and Ethiopia" until its next ordinary session, which was to open on September 4.

Settlement of "the difficulties of a more general nature" between Italy and Ethiopia was left by the Council to a tripartite conference of Great Britain, France and Italy as signatories of the 1906 treaty.⁷⁵ Representatives of these powers convened in Paris on August 14. The British and French delegates jointly suggested a formula whereby Italy might obtain virtual economic domination of Ethiopia. Haile Selassie, it was proposed, might apply to the League or the signatories of the 1906 treaty for economic, financial and even administrative assistance. While Britain and France would subscribe to a loan for developing the resources of Ethiopia, Italy would carry out such projects and nominate foreign advisers or administrators at Addis Ababa. The other powers also expressed their willingness to guarantee the security of Italy's colonies bordering on Ethiopia. This whole arrangement, intended not to infringe Ethiopia's "territorial integrity and independence," was made subject to the consent of Haile Selassie. Mussolini, however, flatly rejected this formula, demanding the right to annex the lowlands of Ethiopia which border on Eritrea and Somaliland and to establish a protectorate over the Ethiopian highlands. On the ground that grants of economic privileges or concessions by Haile Selassie could not be relied on, he insisted that Italian troops occupy Ethiopia, whose disarmament Italy considered the only guarantee of the security of its colonies. The inability of France and Great Britain to accede to Italy's uncompromising demands led to a breakdown of the Paris conversations on August 18.⁷⁶

the British government's failure to appreciate Italy's needs and intentions. Cf. the articles of Signor Gayda in *Giornale d'Italia*.

74. League of Nations, Eighty-seventh (Extraordinary) Session of the Council, *Minutes*, C./87th Session (Extra.)/P.V.2(1). The Council took no steps to halt Italy's military preparations. On August 6 Mussolini announced the mobilization of 52,000 more troops for service in East Africa.

75. Cf. statement of Mr. Eden of Great Britain, *ibid.*, p. 3.

76. *New York Times*, August 15-20, 1935.

CONCLUSION

The arbitration commission charged with settling the Ual Ual dispute, on which Nicolas Politis of Greece served as fifth member, unanimously reported to the League Council on September 4 that neither Italy nor Ethiopia was responsible for the clash of December 5, 1934.⁷⁷ Although Italy was thereby forced to relinquish its claims for apologies and an indemnity, it by no means abandoned its larger demands on Ethiopia recently put forward at the Paris conference.

Italy continued to press these demands at the September Council session. At the opening meeting it presented an elaborate dossier vigorously charging that Ethiopia had violated its treaty obligations, had failed to implement the promises made when it joined the League, and constituted a menace to the neighboring Italian colonies.⁷⁸ On the basis of these accusations, Baron Pompeo Aloisi declared to the Council that Italy withdrew "all confidence with regard to Ethiopia" and reserved to itself "full liberty of action, with the view to adopting all measures that prove necessary for the security of her colonies and for safeguarding her own interests."⁷⁹ Such "measures" almost certainly mean war against Ethiopia, either with the tacit approval of the Council should the later expel Ethiopia from the League, or—failing such expulsion—in defiance of Geneva. Mussolini's war stakes have mounted so high in both men and money as to virtually forbid a settlement until the 200,000 Italian soldiers mobilized in East Africa have gained some victories over the Ethiopians.⁸⁰

While the Council will hardly accept Italy's implied demand that it deprive Ethiopia of League membership,⁸¹ there appears no greater likelihood that it will apply sanctions either to halt Italy's military preparations or to defend Ethiopia in case of attack. At the present time special considerations intensify the general aversion of the powers to undertake sanctions in defense of the principle of collective security. France is fearful that, by offending Italy, it will drive Mussolini into the arms of Hitler; while its reluctance to support a British bid for sanctions is enhanced by Britain's unwillingness

to undertake, in return, unconditional military support of Austrian independence. Without strong French support, the British are apparently unwilling to expose their Mediterranean fleet to Italian submarines and airplanes.⁸² The Council, therefore, is continuing its efforts to find a formula which will satisfy Italy without completely abrogating the independence of Ethiopia.⁸³ Should the League sanction a protectorate over Ethiopia administered by Italy and involving Italian military occupation, however, the fact that Italy would nominally be acting for the League by no means assures the passivity of Ethiopia.⁸⁴

Failure to prevent an Italo-Ethiopian war will have immense repercussions on the maintenance of peace and the present balance of power in Europe. If Italy goes to war in defiance of Geneva, its action will challenge Britain's hitherto undisputed supremacy in the Mediterranean and weaken Italy's potential assistance to France against Germany.⁸⁵ If Italy is successful, its increased power and prestige in Central and Eastern Europe will not be welcome to France, nor in the eastern Mediterranean to Britain. Should Mussolini be defeated, or should a lengthy war drain the Italian treasury, both the Fascist régime and its leader may be overthrown. Success of Great Britain and France in their efforts to find a formula condoning the imperialism of their Italian rival⁸⁶ at the expense of Ethiopia would eliminate the unwelcome alternative of ceding or internationalizing certain of their own colonies.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it may be seriously questioned whether the consequent short-run gains of stronger defense against Nazi Germany and the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* will outweigh the inevitable blow to the League principle of collective security in the face of armed aggression.

82. The British have nevertheless prepared for any eventuality by moving their Mediterranean fleet to the immediate neighborhood of the Suez Canal. For the juridical difficulties concerning the closing of the canal, cf. Raymond Leslie Buell, "The Suez Canal and League Sanctions," *Geneva Special Studies*, August 1935.

83. On September 6 the Council appointed a committee of five to work on these lines.

84. Haile Selassie has recently speeded up the training of the Ethiopian army and sent large detachments to the provinces bordering on Italy's colonies.

85. The Italian war maneuvers on the Austrian border were designed, however, to show France that Italy could cope with the threats of Ethiopia and Germany simultaneously.

86. The suspicion that Great Britain was attempting to penetrate the zone of "special interests" in Ethiopia reserved to Italy was dispelled when the British promoter to whom Haile Selassie had granted a huge oil concession was found to be backed by exclusively American capital. Cf. *New York Times*, September 4, 1935.

87. Such an imperialistic solution, however, would tend to enhance unrest among colored populations in British and French colonies.

77. *New York Times*, September 5, 1935. Both parties, it was declared, thought they were fighting on their own territory, and it proved impossible to determine who fired the first shot.

78. For an abridged text, cf. *ibid.*

79. *Ibid.* Baron Aloisi has since refused to take his place at the Council table while a representative of Ethiopia is present.

80. It is suggested that Mussolini might considerably reduce his ultimate demands once his armies have captured Addis Ababa. Cf. "Augur," *New York Times*, September 6, 1935.

81. Cf. speech of Maxim Litvinov, delegate of the Soviet Union, *ibid.*